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IDEALIST/OXCART

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BYE-2916-66  
15 December 1966  
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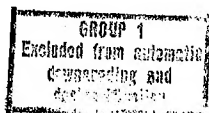
MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: 12 December 1966 Meeting with Mr. Helms re  
OXCART/SR-71.

1. At 4 o'clock on 12 December Mr. Helms convened a group including Col. White, Carl Duckett, Larry Houston and, in the absence of General Bacalis, Mr. Parangosky, and related his meeting at the Bureau of the Budget concerning the OXCART/SR-71 programs. Mr. Helms stated that the meeting at the BOB was attended by Mr. Schultze, Mr. Vance, Dr. Hornig and in addition to himself several BOB people including Messrs Fischer and Thomas.
2. When put to a vote concerning options Messrs Vance, Schultze and Dr. Hornig voted for option three, to terminate the OXCART program. Mr. Helms voted for option two, i. e. the eventual sharing between CIA and the Air Force of the SR-71 fleet. Mr. Helms stated that the Fischer-Benington-Parangosky Committee probably will convene again to address the question of mothballing inasmuch as he, Mr. Helms, questioned the ability to mothball since he was lead to believe by his (CIA) people that mothballing may really mean scrapping the fleet. Mr. Helms stated that he was rather surprised at the vote of his colleagues. Mr. Duckett related the fact that OSA a few days ago came up with some hard information about the SR-71 being in even a poorer posture than we had imagined and that this information was received under the table after the completion of the Fischer-Benington-Parangosky report.
3. The BOB is preparing a letter concerning the results of the aforementioned meeting for the President. BOB hopes to have such a letter prepared by Friday of this week, a copy of which will be sent to CIA. Mr. Helms wants a letter prepared for his signature to the President inasmuch as he dissented from the vote taken. Mr. Helms wants OSA to prepare such a letter which addresses itself to CIA staying in business and opting for option two. He wants a well reasoned case which will review all not just parts of the issues. He suggested we start off such a letter by

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saying that "you will be receiving a letter from the Bureau of the Budget concerning OXCART and before you take any action I want to bring CIA's views to the President's attention".

4. Mr. Helms wants the copies of the letter to be sent to Mr. Moyers, Mr. Rostow, and Mr. Clark Clifford. He envisages his letter being attached or submitted together with the BOB paper to the President. During the meeting he talked to Mr. Moyers on the phone soliciting his counsel on how to get his letter properly before the President in order to insure that the BOB letter is not delivered without Mr. Helms views being made known at the same time.

5. Mr. Helms asked those assembled to render all help necessary to get a proper letter prepared.

6. After the meeting Col. White offered the services, if needed, of Mr. Hank Knoche to help with such a letter in view of the fact that he was free and had experience in preparing papers for higher authority. I stated that I would like about two days to prepare OSA drafts after which such drafts would be circulated and assistance solicited at that time. Following this discussion I visited Carl Duckett's office at which time he offered guidance on the preparation of the letter along these lines:

a. That it be short, cover a brief history of the program, comment on when we reached readiness, the fact that we demonstrated this and that the SR-71 program has not yet demonstrated operational readiness.

b. Cover in a gutty fashion security and any other topics.

c. Include some reference to the fact that the country needs a capability with trouble spots all over the world and it would be indeed unfortunate to give up the capability at this time.

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7. Following this meeting OSA convened a task force approach to come up with two option proposals for consideration. The task force consisted of [ ] on the one hand and Messrs [ ] [ ] Col. Shelton, [ ] on the other hand. In addition after drafts were being massaged, a critique with most of the above mentioned together with Messrs [ ] and [ ] participating. The results of these critiques were incorporated in the two draft papers that emerged and that were distributed 15 December. In addition [ ] prepared and [ ] is massaging a third (head of a pin) version which we will keep in our back pocket.

[ ]  
JOHN PARANGOSKY

Acting Director of Special Activities

Distribution:

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